

duct, are an additional incentive to earnest and unremitting labours for the instruction of mankind. (From a Bill for establishing religious freedom, 1779. F. II., 238.)

RELIGION.—The rights of conscience we never submitted (to the rulers) we could not submit. We are answerable to them to our God. The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg. If it be said his testimony in a court of justice cannot be relied on, reject it then, and be the stigma on him. Constraint may make him worse by making him a hypocrite, but it will never make him a truer man. It may fix him obstinately in his errors, but it will not cure them. Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error. They are the natural enemies of error, and error only. (From "Notes on Virginia," 1782. F. III., 264.)

RELIGION.—You will next read the new testament. It is the history of a personage called Jesus. Keep in your eye the opposite pretensions. First, of those who say he was begotten by God, born of a virgin, suspended and reversed the laws of nature at will, and ascended bodily into heaven; and second, of those who say he was a man of illegitimate birth, of a benevolent heart, enthusiastic mind, who set out without pretensions to divinity, ended in believing them, and was punished capitally for sedition. * * * Do not be frightened from this inquiry by any fear of its consequences. If it ends in a belief that there is no god, you will find incitements to virtue in the comfort and pleasantries you feel in its exercise, and the love of others which it will procure you. If you find reason to believe there is a God, a consciousness that you are acting under his eye and that he approves you, will be vast additional incite-